

August 6, 2002

TO: Susan Murphy
FROM: Howard W. Bell, Jr.
RE: Interview notes

The following are excerpts from the notes I took during our telephone interview in May. I have incorporated these excerpts in a draft Best Practices report that I am writing. Please verify that the following excerpts capture the essence of your position.

Susan Murphy of the University of San Francisco:¹

- 1) Stated that the:
 - a) Number of reported dependents in college is sometimes a source of error and her school requires self-verification of the number of dependents enrolled in college.
 - b) Reporting of taxes paid is a source of error for a number of applicants:
 - i) Taxes paid versus taxes withheld are sometimes misreported.
 - ii) The parents of dependent applicants sometimes report untaxed income incorrectly and the College uses an applicant's parents' W-2 form to verify untaxed income.
 - c) Zero income filers (whether \$0 AGI or \$0 income) should be reviewed.
 - d) Dependency status other than an age-based attribute can sometimes cause errors.
- 2) Reported that the College uses high school tours/presentations to inform students, parents, and counselors how to complete the FAFSA form and how to avoid making errors.
- 3) Proposed that:
 - a) Certain boxes on the web FAFSA must be filled in before one can go to the next question. Used as examples of the boxes that might be targeted for this treatment the number of people in an applicant's parents' household and the number of these individuals who will be college students in the upcoming academic year.
 - b) W-2's should be required because they are very revealing especially in the area of untaxed income and benefits.
 - c) The verification effort might want to include the last semester's tuition bill to verify other members of an applicant's household who are enrolled in college. However, this is not a big issue at the University of San Francisco.
 - d) That FSA engage in year to year tracking of Pell Grant recipients.
 - e) That there be automated data loads from IRS data.

¹ Information identified in a May 13, 2002 telephone discussion with Susan Murphy of the University of San Francisco.